

REMARKS

The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it raises no new issues. Alternatively, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it places the application in better form for Appeal.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-3 are currently pending in the above-identified application. Claim 1 has been amended to define the Shore D surface hardness. Support for this amendment is found at pages 34 and 35, Tables 8 and 9 in which all cover hardness values are 66 Shore D or 96 JIS-C and 69 Shore D or 99 JIS-C. No new matter has been added by the claim amendments.

Rejections under 35 USC 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3 as obvious over Nakahara et al. USP 5,002,281 (Nakahara '281) in view of Higuchi et al. USP 5,830,085 (Higuchi '085). Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully request the withdrawal thereof.

Applicants submit that the present invention is directed to a multi-piece solid golf ball with an outer core, an inner core and one or more layers covering the core having the recited specifications.

Applicants submit that the present invention is not obvious over the combination of Nakahara '281 and Higuchi '085.

Nakahara '281 discloses a golf ball with a cover formed from an ionomer resin. However, Nakahara '281 fails to disclose or suggest a cover with a combination of an ionomer resin and a thermoplastic elastomer or diene block copolymer. In addition, Nakahara '281 fails to disclose or suggest the instant hardness range between the outer core and the inner core and the newly recited surface hardness in Shore D hardness of 66 to 69. Nakahara '281 only mentions a surface hardness in Table 1 of the reference. The surface hardness disclosed is Shore D 70. Clearly, this surface hardness is outside the claimed range of 66 to 69 as recited in claim 1. As such, Nakahara '281 fails to disclose the recited specifications of the claimed multi-piece solid golf ball.

In addition, Applicants submit that although Higuchi '085 teaches a cover made from an ionomer and elastomer, Higuchi '085 fails to disclose the cited surface hardness in the range of Shore D 66 to 69.

Moreover, Higuchi '085 is distinguished from the present invention in that the intermediate layer of Higuchi '085 corresponds to the outer core of the present invention and is formed from ionomer or other thermoplastic resins. In contrast, the outer core of the present invention is formed from rubber composition. As such, not only does Higuchi '085 have contradictory teachings to the present invention, Higuchi '085 does not add the missing components of the claimed invention to the

disclosure of Nakahara '281 to motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the references to arrive at the presently claimed invention.

As such, the Examiner has not made a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness and the rejection should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Kecia Reynolds (Reg. No. 47,021) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$400.00 is attached hereto.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

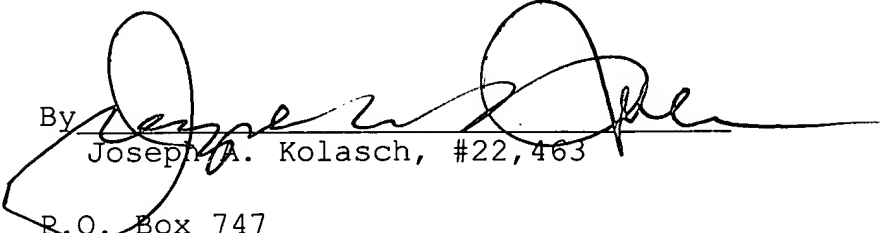
If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees

required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The claims have been amended as follows:

Claim 1. (Twice amended) A multi-piece solid golf ball comprising a core consisting of an inner core and an outer core formed on the inner core, and one or more layers of cover covering the core,

wherein the inner core has a diameter of 30 to 39.5 mm and a center hardness in JIS-C hardness of 55 to 70, and is formed from press molded rubber composition comprising polybutadiene, a co-crosslinking agent, an organic peroxide and a filler, and the JIS-C hardness at a distance of 15 mm from the center point of the inner core is higher than the center hardness by 5 to 20,

the outer core has a thickness of 0.3 to 2.0 mm and a surface hardness in JIS-C hardness of 75 to 90, and is formed from press molded rubber composition comprising polybutadiene, a co-crosslinking agent, an organic peroxide and a filler, and the surface hardness of the outer core is higher than the center hardness of the inner core by 15 to 30, and

the cover is formed from a combination of ionomer resin and at least one of thermoplastic elastomer or diene block copolymer, and the outmost cover layer has a thickness of 1.5 to 2.5 mm and a surface hardness in Shore D hardness of 66 to 69 [64 to 72].